

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 306447
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/EE:IMSILINS:LG
APPROVED BY EUR:JAARMITAGE
NEA/IAI:G;ULI-K
S/S: MR. BRIDGES

----- 052838 /16

R 180054Z DEC 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 306447

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CVIS, EEWT, RO

SUBJECT: ROMANIAN JEWISH EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL

REF: STATE 282448; BUCHAREST 7407

1. ISRAELI COUNSELOR PEDAHZUR CALLED ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE DECEMBER 14 TO FOLLOW UP ON CONVERSATION REPORTED REFTEL, IN WHICH ARMITAGE HAD ASKED FOR MORE INFORMATION FROM ISRAELI GOVERNMENT THAN NOW AVAILABLE TO US REGARDING NUMBER OF ROMANIAN JEWS WISHING TO EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL.

2. PEDAHZUR SAID NEGOTIATIONS IN BUCHAREST ON EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL HAD ADJOURNED WEEK OF NOVEMBER 15 WITHOUT REACHING A CONCLUSION. IT HAD BEEN AGREED TO MEET AGAIN IN JANUARY. PEDAHZUR SAID THAT ISRAELIS HAD NO GROUNDS
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TO BE VERY OPTIMISTIC. PRESENT EMIGRATION TRENDS POINTED TO A 1976 TOTAL OF ABOUT 2100-2200, AND "BEST WE CAN HOPE FOR IS TO KEEP THE SAME LEVEL FOR NEXT YEAR." PEDAHZUR NOTED THAT RABBI ROSEN, AT A WORLD JEWISH CONFERENCE IN MADRID, HAD SAID THAT THE 1977 FIGURE WOULD BE ABOUT THE SAME AS FOR 1976.

3. PEDAHZUR SAID THE ISRAELIS HAD EXPLORED EVERY POSSIBLE

CHANNEL IN SEEKING TO OBTAIN HIGHER EMIGRATION LEVELS FROM THE GOR, BUT THAT ULTIMATELY THE ISSUE IS DECIDED BY PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU AND REPRESENTATIONS MADE WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ARE "JUST FOR THE RECORD." HE SAID THE ISRAELIS HAD LEARNED FROM "VARIOUS SOURCES" THAT ONLY THE U.S. HAS ANY LEVERAGE TO EXERT ON THIS ISSUE. EVEN THIS LEVERAGE HAS DIMINISHED BECAUSE, IN THE ISRAELI VIEW, THE ROMANIANS ARE TAKING IT FOR GRANTED THAT MFN WILL BE RENEWED MORE OR LESS AUTOMATICALLY.

4. ARMITAGE ASKED WHETHER IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO GIVE US SOME IDEA OF HOW MANY VISA APPLICATIONS WERE PENDING FOR EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL. WE DID NOT WISH TO SET QUOTAS FOR THE GOR, BUT WE NEEDED SUCH INFORMATION TO GIVE OUR REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GOR SOME FORCE. WHEN FACED WITH THE USUAL ROMANIAN ASSURANCE THAT ALL WHO WISHED TO EMIGRATE WERE BEING ALLOWED TO DO SO, WE WANTED TO BE ABLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT WE KNEW A CERTAIN NUMBER HAD APPLIED TO EMIGRATE DURING THE PAST THREE MONTHS. PEDAHZUR REPLIED THAT THERE WAS NO WAY TO CHECK THE VISA BACKLOG IN BUCHAREST. THE ISRAELI EMBASSY BECOMES INVOLVED ONLY AFTER THE PASSPORTS ARE ISSUED; IT NO LONGER RECEIVES PRELIMINARY LISTS OF INTENDING EMIGRANTS. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, TO TELL US HOW MANY EMIGRANTS FOR WHOM A PASSPORT AND AN ISRAELI VISA HAD BEEN ISSUED FAILED TO EMIGRATE, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND THIS MIGHT SERVE AS AN INDICATOR OF ROMANIAN EMIGRATION PERFORMANCE.

5. ARMITAGE REPLIED THAT THIS MIGHT BE USEFUL BUT WOULD NOT GET AT THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM. IT WOULD BE MUCH MORE USEFUL TO RECEIVE EITHER NUMBERS OR ACTUAL LISTS OF INTENDING IMMIGRANTS FROM WHATEVER RELIABLE SOURCE, FOR EXAMPLE THE FEDERATION OF ROMANIAN JEWS IN ISRAEL. LISTS WOULD GIVE US PERHAPS THE MOST EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR INTERVENING WITH THE GOR. WE COULD DISCUSS HOW THESE LISTS WOULD BE USED OR TO WHOM THEY WOULD BE ATTRIBUTED, BUT THERE DID NOT SEEM TO BE ANY DANGER THAT RELEASE OF THE NAMES OF APPLICANTS SHOULD PUT THEM IN GREATER JEOPARDY, SINCE THEIR NAMES WERE ALREADY KNOWN TO THE GOR. ARMITAGE URGED PEDAHZUR ONCE MORE TO SEEK SUCH INFORMATION FROM TEL AVIV, AND PEDAHZUR AGREED TO DO SO.

6. FOR TEL AVIV: GIVEN DIVERGENCE IN INFORMATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN EMIGRATION PROBLEM BETWEEN FONOFF AND ISRAELI IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES (OR FEDERATION OF

ROMANIAN JEWS) NOTED IN BUCHAREST 6829, DOES EMBASSY HAVE SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW BEST TO PROCEED IN OUR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN SPECIFICS ON NAMES AND NUMBERS OF PROSPECTIVE JEWISH EMIGRANTS FROM ROMANIA?
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: JEWS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, INFORMATION CONTROL, NEGOTIATIONS, EMIGRANTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE306447
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: IMSLINS:LG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760465-1062
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761230/aaaaazon.tel
Line Count: 124
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 STATE 282448, 76 BUCHAREST 7407
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2004 by woolflhd>; APPROVED <02 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ROMANIAN JEWISH EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL
TAGS: CVIS, EEWT, RO, US
To: BUCHAREST
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006